

Went
BANK HOLIDAYS!

AND

1875
WHAT NEXT?

OR

THE DELIGHTS OF A SCAB ACT.

TWO DRAMATIC ROMANCES,

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Launceston, Tasmania:

PRINTED AT THE "LAUNCESTON EXAMINER" OFFICE.

1870.

BANK HOLIDAYS.

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE.

IN ONE ACT.



Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep.

Measure for Measure.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE KING OF THE ISLAND OF OLD FOXES.

THE ADMIRAL OF THE FLYING SQUADRON.

PRINCE. •

LORD BLOWFLY.

LORD SUNDON.

LORD MANTRAP.

A RUINED SHEEP FARMER.

THE QUEEN.

PRINCESS.

LADY VULPINA.

LADY ROHILDA.

LORDS, LADIES, OFFICERS, CLERKS, SAILORS,
SERVANTS, &c., &c.

(All Rights are Reserved.)

Launceston, Tasmania:

PRINTED AT THE "LAUNCESTON EXAMINER" OFFICE.

1870.

BANK HOLIDAYS.

SCENE.—THE ISLAND OF OLD FOXES. THE AUDIENCE
CHAMBER IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

Enter King, Queen, Prince, Princess, Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.

KING.—Fair Queen be seated, son and daughter sit.
My lords and ladies, your patience we'll not vex
By asking you to rest your weary limbs
On couches of such delicate luxury
As those we see ; especially as we,
Your Lord, your Governor, your King,
Are well content to play the haughty monarch
On legs which most of you I know must envy.
But, lords and ladies, not to keep you all
Waiting in sad suspense, expectancy,
And what not, which you know as well as I :
Know I have called you hitherward to meet,
To see, to hear a weighty deputation,
Who in attendance are to urge a plea
For them of such importance
That were the earth by means of outward ear
To hear the subject matter of their speech
It would, like fiery orb in the dark abyss
Of boundless space, stand still with solemn awe,
And stir no breath of circumambient air,
For wonder deep, astonishment profound :
And with your leave, but not without, we'll give
Orders exact and positive command
T' admit this deputation to our presence.
What says our Queen, our lovely partner ?
Our joy, our love, our blessed angel, speak.

QUEEN.—Lord of the lovely isle, in the proud title
Of Queen thereof I take supreme delight ;
Your sovereign will my rarest pleasure is.
Therefore pronounce your wise and free command ;
And woe to him, as far as I have power,
Who hears and does it not.

KING.—This answer
Of our gracious sovereign lady Queen Superba
Amplly sufficeth us, and no precious time
We'll waste to hear our loving councillors,
Who, we are sure, go with us heart and hand.

LORDS, &c., (bowing).—We do, your Majesty.

KING.—Then, my good Lord Blowfly,
Order the deputation to our presence.
My lords, I think that I can call to mind
An ancient law by which it is enacted

[Exit lord.]

That all strange visitors from foreign lands
 Who, by design or chance, presume to come
 And set unhallow'd feet within our realm,
 Shall pay the forfeit by becoming slaves
 To serve us and our heirs for ever
 In willing servitude and bondage, light
 Or heavy, as we please to put upon them.
 Is there not such a law?

1ST LORD.—My liege,
 Of such a law I nothing know ;
 But I will search with frantic haste and zeal
 Our ponderous statute books in hopes to find it,
 And when I find it, rest assured I shall
 With railway speed acquaint your Majesty.

KING.—Lord Sundob, save your labor.
 Am I not of this favored isle
 Sole king, lords, commons—all in one ?
 Therefore by my sovereign authority
 I now enact this salutary law.
 See it be drafted and engrossed forthwith.

1ST LORD.—I shall, my liege.

KING.—Now lend your ears—I have news for them,
 News that shall make them tingle with delight.
 Ladies, prepare your diamond piercing darts ;
 Lords, sheathe your poignards 'neath your quilted vests,
 For lo, upon our coasts sail noble ships,
 Manned by a race of beautiful barbarians
 From an old land ruled by a sovereign sister,
 Who in holy wedlock I would reunite
 Were I not wedded to a true Zenobia—
 My precious queen of hearts. Devise some trick
 'T' entice those ocean rambles on our soil.
 Promise them pleasure, hospitality,
 Wave wands of peace and flags of snowy whiteness,
 And all who blindly put their confidence
 In our fair words seize and hold fast,
 And bind with fetters hand and heart and foot.
 See to it, ladies. Soft, here come our sad,
 Heart-broken, ever-to-be-pitied subjects.

Enter a few Government Officers, Bank Clerks, and others.

1ST GOV. OFF.—Be gracious, King, and grant our humble
 prayer,

The prayer of men who're worn off their legs.

KING.—What is it ? Speak.

1ST GOV. OFF.—Sire, we're condemned to toil
 From ten till four in dingy offices,
 Pining for light and sweet health-giving sport.
 And while we sit over our odious tasks,
 Spoiling whole reams of paper, or changing
 Public and private money, our busy brains
 Are o'er the mountains wandering far away,
 Or rambling, rod in hand, by river's bank,
 Or in fair meads adorned with summer flowers,
 Leading the thoughtless and enchanting fair
 To scenes of gaiety and dalliance rapturous.

Therefore we come to crave the boon that we
May be permitted to relax our labor,
And have more PLACE, more PAY, more HOLIDAYS.

KING.—Your prayer is heard and granted. Henceforth
We do decree that every second day
Shall be devoted to sweet relaxation ;
Pay shall be doubled ; and as for place,
My faithful lords will places plenty make.
See to it, lords ; retire with these our subjects ;
Debate, confer, the glory of our reign
Must not be dimmed by parsimonious lore.
For revenue, you can tax the lands
Until the owners sue to us for grace
In dust and ashes—aye, and rags of sackcloth.
Leave us.

ALL.—We humbly thank your Majesty. [*Exeunt Lords, &c.*]

KING.—Prince and Princess we will excuse you.

[*Exeunt Prince and Princess.*]

Now we're alone,
Wife, I have somewhat for thy private ear.
How is it that the Prince, my son and heir,
Doth love the blooming maid the fair Vulpina,
And I consulted not in the matter ?

QUEEN.—The Prince, your son and heir ! Ha, ha !
Why he's a washerwoman's son,
Brought to your palace surreptitiously.

KING.—Pooh—pooh ! enough of that. Answer me, or—

QUEEN.—Or what ?

KING.—I will compel an answer.

QUEEN.—Poor gingerbread ! poor, poor inflated gander !
When did your fit come on ?

KING.—Teeming again with insolence, madam ! I tell you
I will be master in my own dominions,
I want to know why is the Prince—

QUEEN.—They'll hear you ; speak it lower. O, base
Insidious despot, I shall tell you nothing
But what I choose ; and since I do not choose,
I'll nothing tell you, and you'll nothing know.
So you may knock your head against a stone,
And grind your teeth, and bite your silvery tongue ;
My will is mine, and yours is milk and water.

KING (*aside*).—By great Magog,
The insulting termagant shall die to-night.
I'll call Lord Blowfly to devise a plan.
Do you remember, madam, how,
At your sweet feminine instigation,
I helped my parents to dethrone ?

QUEEN.—Yes, I remember, and this as well—
That you rejoiced to hear your sire was dead,
And under circumstances strange he died.

KING.—Well ! well ! well ! you were as glad as I,
And gaily spent the old King's money.
With it you built a princely residence,
Ignoring me and my opinion.
And when 'twas gone you filled your purse again

By barbarous levies and exactions
Made in my name, so that the groaning voice
Of a half maddened, beggar'd populace
Ascends to heaven and clamors there for vengeance.

QUEEN.—You tax'd as well as I, you spent the money
On favorites and schemes of rankest folly,
Worthy of such a moon-struck reprobate.
Works reproductive!—plish! not worth a straw,
Cash swallow'd up in depths of ocean blue.
Hush! hold your tongue!—if I give my cat a mouse
Does she make ducks and drakes of it?

KING.—No, she makes cat's meat of it.

QUEEN.—As you do with your money. Faugh! I scorn you.
Enter Lord Blowfly stealthily.

KING (*seeing him*).—Sweet love, repeat your charming,
winning words;
I hang with ecstasy on your ruby lips,
How now, my lord?

L. BLOW.—My gracious liege, a beggar at the gate
Sues humbly for admittance; he a bearer is,
He says, of a petition to your Majesty
Of absolute life and death.

KING.—Well, let him wait. How fares your lordship?

L. BLOW.—Well, your Majesty.

KING.—In bodily health you're well;
I mean the honors of your new made office—
Do they sit lightly on you?

L. BLOW.—So lightly, please your Grace,
That I could take a dozen more on me.

KING.—And the act, how doth it work?

L. BLOW.—Poorly, my liege—'tis not severe enough;
'Twill only ruin a moiety of the people
Whose maintenance is sheep. I want an act
That will for ever settle the horrid hashes
Of full seven-eighths. 'Tis too mild, too mild,
Small beer—weak water, wanting brandy.

KING.—Give us time, my lord, and we will mend
That serious fault. Admit the suppliant.

L. BLOW.—Admit the suppliant.

Enter ruined Sheep Farmer with a petition.

KING.—Give us that paper! what's this? what's this?
Rank treason, I will swear.

(*Reads*) "The humble petition of George Bankrup, late
sheep farmer, now out of business (an idle scamp) most
respectfully sheweth"—'tis rubbish, Blowfly.

L. BLOW.—Please you Majesty, I know 'tis rubbish.

KING.—He's an impostor, Blowfly.

L. BLOW.—He is, your Majesty.

KING.—Sirrah, your petition is rubbish, and you're an
impostor; you are banished for ever from our presence;
yet stay, have you any sheep?

FARMER.—No, your Majesty; they were seized to pay the
fine under the new act.

KING.—And very properly so. Have you a family?

FAR.—Fourteen children, Sir.

KING.—How many holidays had you when in business?

FAR.—Besides the Sundays, Sire, only Christmas Day.

KING.—One too many for you, lazy fool.

KING.—Any money?

FAR.—No, Sire, my creditors—

KING.—No money! traitor scum, begone; kick him out
Blowfly. *[L. Blowfly kicks the farmer out.]*

Ha! ha! ha! what think you of him, sweet Superba?

QUEEN.—Ha! ha! ha! ha! whatever you think, dearest
monarch of my heart.

L. BLOW.—Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! As rich a thing as
I've seen for many a day! ha! ha! ha!

KING—Leave us, fair Queen, I humbly beseech you;

[Exit Queen.]

My lord, I have a matter for your private ear;
Come with us to our closet.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE PALACE.

Enter the Prince and the Lady Vulpina.

LADY V.—Sweet Prince, 'tis time to fly: a storm is brewing.

PRINCE.—Why, that is nothing new, my dear Vulpina.

One storm doth blow, and when 'tis calm again

Forthwith the elements are set to work

To brew another, so 'tis always brewing

When not engaged in blowing.

VUL.—Sir Prince, I want not your philosophy.

I say the times are dangerous, and fly we must

If we would save our valuables or our lives.

I shall a tale unfold, and as 'tis but an hour

Since it was forced on my astonished ears,

It has lost nothing in my memory.

Know that, as now, I look'd with curious eye

O'er secret letters in the royal closet,

I heard the King approach with some one else,

And, fearful of discovery, I thrust

Myself within the recesses of his desk,

And heard, unseen, a plot of dire portent

Hatch'd by the crafty minister, Lord Blowfly.

The Queen, whom his Majesty loves so well,

Is, as she, according to her habit,

Reposeth in her rich and fragrant boudoir,

To die to-night by baneful strangulation.

PRINCE.—Ha! a good riddance; I may be marked as well.

VUL.—Therefore be ready, pack your things;

I shall be ready in an hour hence—fly,

Forge the King's name, and draw what cash you can.

Haste—it is nearly three: we meet disguised

By the Miranda fountain.

PRINCE.—Dearest, I will.

But hold, what day is this—Thursday—Friday?

By the eternal mountains 'tis a holiday:

Stagnation seize upon them, one and all;

We're ruined and undone.

VUL.—O misery!

But fly—fly—fly!

[Exeunt severally.]

Enter Queen from behind a Curtain.

QUEEN.—And so I am to die to-night ! and a good riddance, too.

Sweet Prince, I hold myself your debtor,
And I will surely pay the debt I owe.
Now for a counter plot to give these knaves
Trouble for nothing. I'll make them dig the ground,
And I shall eat the fruit. What, ho ! slave Robert.

Enter Servant.

Go tell the King I have important news
For his immediate ear, in breathless haste.
Begone.

[*Exeunt Servant.*

Be quiet brain—be still my panting bosom,
Beat gently heart, be calm, O precious tongue !

(*Sings*) Be silent now, ye notes of love,
And come not here again ;
On earth below, in heaven above,
I'll not renew the strain.
Thy sweet romance shall pass away
Like happy hours gone by,
When friendship gilt the flying day,
And parting caused a sigh.
O thou art gone, dear heart of flesh,
And fain I'd have thee back,
Since once the world was fair and fresh,
But now 'tis grim and black.
Ah, might I think thou still art here,
And not for ever flown !
I cannot shed one pitying tear,
For thou hast turned to stone.
I whisper still—flow on fair stream,
I cannot see thee glide,
Nor watch the glancing golden gleam
Reflected from thy tide.
I cannot hear, as once I heard,
Upon thy wooded shore,
Love's joyful sound—and now that word
Shall come to me no more.

Enter the King.

KING.—Enchantress, where art thou ?
Speak, fond love—what is it ?

QUEEN.—My royal husband hasten,
Thy precious son and heir, Prince Hornyhed,
Doth in an hour fly with Miss Vulpina :
Look to your cash.

KING.—No cash he'll get,
The banks are shut, it is a holiday.
Lucky for us, but very sad for him.
Where shall I find him ?

QUEEN.—At the Miranda fountain
They meet within an hour, make haste I say,
And intercept them, put them in prison,
And see that they escape not.

KING.—My treasure Queen, I will [Exit.]
 QUEEN.—Now to prepare me for my strangulation [Exit.]

Enter from a closet the Lady Rohilda.

ROH.—What words are these I've strangely heard?
 I something know, 'tis well to be prepared,
 But not a word, these walls have eager ears,
 And plans, if spoke, are sure to be defeated:
 I'll bide my time. I, too, must quickly fly.
 These deadly halls, abodes of misery. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—THE QUEEN'S BOUDOIR. A LAMP BURNING.

The Queen discovered arranging a couch, lies down, but soon rises and rings a bell.

B. K.

Enter a Servant.

QUEEN.—Summon the Lady Rohilda hither.

SER.—Yes, your Majesty. [Exit.]

Enter Lady Rohilda.

QUEEN.—My faithful friend, I fear I'm not quite well,
 And to amuse me I've had a merry thought.
 You know this is the anniversary
 Of my most happy marriage with the King.
 I do expect he will come hither soon
 To take me to the royal banqueting hall;
 But ere we go I'll have some harmless play,
 And give him what he loves—a sweet surprise.
 Lie on this couch, and take my robes upon you;
 I shall be near: be sure you soundly sleep.
 When the King comes he'll look into your face,
 And when I hear his startled exclamation,
 I'll rush upon him with a merry laugh,
 And clasp him wondering to my heart of hearts.

ROH.—Madam, to hear is to obey.

[She lies down; the Queen arranges the robe and retires.]

ROH. (*getting up*)—What a fair fox is this; she would have me slain, but is there not here a bolster? and doth she not keep a mask in yonder drawer to amuse herself withal? I must be quick.

[She ties the mask on the bolster, and covers it with the Queen's robe, then gets under the dressing table; the cloth conceals her.]

Enter (whispering) the King and Lord Blowfly, with black masks on, a dark lantern, and a rope.

KING.—Hist!

L. BLOW.—Hist!

KING.—Be quick, she's fast asleep;

Yet we'll not shed her blood you know, you know.

L. BLOW.—True, Sire; yet we'll not shed her blood you know, you know.

KING.—Sirrah, 'tis a quotation.

L. BLOW.—Is it? Well, I'm ready; will you not kiss her first?

KING.—Kiss and be flogged; is this a time for kissing?

L. BLOW.—Stand there, then ; when I throw you the rope, pull hard and flinch not. Now. [*They pull.*] Dang it, how quietly she dies !

KING.—She's dead, poor soul ; now by the statute Of the old iceberg knight I'll dig a hole, And you shall bring the body ; thence we'll to the banquet, And reasons give for my fair consort's absence. [*Exit.*]

L. BLOW.—Come my fair enemy, I oft wished you thus. [*Takes up the body and is carrying it away, when the Queen rushes in, her face dusted with flour.*]

QUEEN.—Lay down my body, rash, beclouded man, or hear your doom.

L. BLOW.—O fiends and witches ! save me ! save me ! [*Exit.*]

QUEEN.—Rohilda, thou art dead ; I grieve for thee, Yet thou deserved'st to die, because I saw A growing fondness on thy part for one Whom now I must not name ; I'll bury thee, But o'er thee shed no tear. [*Takes up the body and is carrying it away, when Rohilda springs from under the table in a white sheet.*]

ROH.—Forbear false, wretched, miserable woman ; Put down my sweet remains : because I knew Thy secret sin, was I to die this death ? Ah ! cursed——

QUEEN.—O ! mercy ! spare me, spare me ! [*Faints.*]

Enter the Princess.

PRIN.—What noise ? Alas ! my mother !

ROH.—Sweet child, she's not thy mother ; Thou art the daughter of a virtuous lady, Who died when thou wert born. I brought thee to her A tender babe ; she reared thee as her own ; Not for her love to thee, but for herself. Be quick and come with me ; thou art too pure To dwell a moment longer in this house.

PRIN.—Rohilda, you have never yet deceived me, I'll go and live with you for ever. [*Exeunt.*]

The scene closes.

SCENE IV.—A PUBLIC PARK.

Enter on one side the Admiral of the Flying Squadron, with officers and seamen ; on the other the King with lords, ladies, &c.

AD.—I demand allegiance sworn by true oaths To my august and sovereign lady, the Queen Of mighty England ; withhold it not Or I shall treat you all as traitors vile, In summary jurisdiction, servitude, and death.

KING.—Vain boaster, I am sole despotic king Of this fair, happy, and contented isle ; For daring to set foot upon our shores You are our prisoners ; you shall know our power. Surrender ! take no vain deliberations ; We have the lightning glances, sure to kill, Th' envenom'd shafts of green-eyed jealousy,

The rankling daggers of our polished envy,
While you have nothing but your bull-dog courage,
Which carries you in triumph o'er the waves.
'Twill not avail you—we are invincible.

AD.—Babbler ! or monarch as you call yourself,
Truce to your insolent and vain-glorious tongue ;
You make me smile with satisfaction grim,
As Trojan Hector o'er the rash Patroclus.
Know that averse I am to shedding blood ;
I would not hurt a hair of these poor people,
Who tremble 'neath your hideous tyranny ;
I will not sully my untarnished glory,
The glory of my service, Queen, and country,
By holding intercourse with such as you.
You trample on the slaves who tamely bear
Your galling yoke ; you rob them, you devour
Their hard-won sustenance ; you take their food,
Their drink, their raiment—nay, their ornaments,
Their carriages ; their every necessity
Must pay a duty to your insatiate maw.
Their bills and cheques must pay a stamp tax too ;
And as, O heaven ! all that is not enough
To satisfy your shark's rapacity,
You needs must borrow sums incredible,
And grind your country down with six per cent.
On hundreds, thousands, and full soon on millions.
Have you no heart ? Draw and defend yourself ;
I'll fight you single-handed, though I fear
I'll break my blade against the cannon ball
Which some foul field has planted in your bosom.

KING.—Defend me, lords ; ladies, prepare your darts ;
Hurrah for credit, pleasure, cash, and liberty !—Fall on !

[A battle is fought. Several naval officers are instantly shot
dead by the (g)lances from the ladies' eyes. The King
and lords unsheath their daggers and rush at the
Admiral, who, supported by his men, gains the victory,
and takes them prisoners.]

AD.—Now, tyrant !

KING.—Now, Admiral, do your worst.

AD.—What is your name ?

KING.—My name is writ

Deep in the pages of the statute books,
And by my acts they know me.

AD.—Where is your wife ?

KING.—I know not ;

She has absconded, and I pray to heaven
That she may ne'er come back.

QUEEN (*throwing off her disguise*).—That prayer is answered,
Though not according to your wish.

Lord Admiral, I am an injured woman ;

He is a most infatuated HUMBUG.

He tried to murder me, but I have wit,
And so escaped the snare ; I'm innocent,
I'm innocent as a lovely babe unborn.

LADY ROHILDA (*throwing off her disguise*).—You are indeed
An innocent babe unborn ! Why, Lord Admiral,
She tried to have me slain by the foul King
And one Lord Blowfly, whom I see not here.

AD.—A pretty kettle of fish ! Send for Lord Blowfly ;
Take the King and Queen together
To my ship, they shall before my sovereign
Hear their irrevocable condemnation.

[*Shouting within, and cries of "Down with the tyrant !"
"We're saved !" "Hurrah !" &c.*]

KING AND QUEEN.—Have pity, Admiral.

AD.—Pity, when had you pity ? Yes, I'll pity,
I'll ransom you ; two million sterling pounds,
Paid down within four hours, shall be the sum.

KING.—Lord Mantrap, go quickly to the banks
And get the money. (*Aside*) - I'll make the people pay.

L. MAN.—My leige, I would, but—

KING.—But what, my lord ?

L. MAN.—My gracious King, the banks are shut,
The clerks are gone—it is a HOLIDAY !

AD.—Away with them.

[*Exeunt sailors with King and Queen.*]

[*Enter the broken sheep farmer leading Lord Blowfly by the
collar, loaded with chains.*]

Is this Lord Blowfly ? What have you to say ?

L. BLOW.—Sir Admiral, send for Sir John Rackrent,
A bosom friend of mine ; he will acquit me.

AD.—An arrant conjuror and councillor of ill ;
Send for him ? Aye, to banish him with thee.
What do these knaves deserve ?

A SAILOR.—The coal-hole, tar, and feathers—blow 'em up.

AD.—A happy thought, the coal-hole—promote that hand ;
My ship has coals, and fires require feeding.

[*Exit Blowfly, guarded.*]

And now, dear people, let us be good friends,
For your past woes full joy shall make amends.

*They join hands and play a game of kiss-in-the-ring, all the
ladies present heartily kissing the Admiral, to whom*

WITH OR WITHOUT PERMISSION,

THIS LITTLE PLAY IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY HIS HUMBLE AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JOHN SMITH.

Smith Villa,

December 24th, 1869.

WHAT NEXT?

OR

THE DELIGHTS OF A SCAB ACT.

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE.



DON PEDRO.—Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

CLAUDIO.—I have drunk poison while he uttered it.

Much ado about Nothing.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MR. BANKRUP, A COLONIST.

MR. GUBBS, A PROPRIETOR OF LAND.

MR. WALTER SPOONEY, IN LOVE WITH MISS BANKRUP.

INSPECTOR UNDER THE SCAB ACT.

MRS. BANKRUP.

MRS. BANKRUP'S FOURTEEN CHILDREN.

A BOY.

SCENE I.—THE LAND OF RUINATION. A COUNTRY HOUSE.

MR. BANKRUP LAUGHING. MRS. BANKRUP CRYING.

Mr. B.—What's the matter, Angelina? ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B.—O! monster, how can you laugh? Don't you know we're ruined? Have you any feeling for me and our innocent babes? Fourteen I've brought you regularly, Mr. B., every year at lambing time since my seventeenth birthday; then we were well off. Now, just do leave off your horrid laughter and take our desperate affairs into consideration; wool that you used to get one and ninepence a pound for, down to ninepence; lambs that you got seven shillings for can hardly be sold for eighteen pence, and for them you must take a bill at nine months, which your banker will tell you to light your pipe with.

Mr. B.—Don't cry, lovey—What next? Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B.—And I'd like to know what next? No money in the bank, a draper's bill, a tailor's bill, a shoemaker's bill, and I don't know how many other bills; rent to pay—what will the landlord do if the rent is not paid? Interest to pay on money

that you borrowed from trusting friends ; if they were paid they would never again trust you with a farthing. The poor children ! O my heart breaks in two when I think of them ! O ! alack the day that ever I was born !

Mr. B.—Well, my dear, what next ? Don't fret. Worse people than you have been born. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Mrs. B.—You shocking, insensible, insufferable creature ; you provoke me beyond all the extremities of impatience. Isn't there money due to the grocer, to the doctor, to the Stipend fund ? Isn't there the police rate to pay ? for no possible use except the pleasure of seeing the superintendent about twice a year, and being obliged to tell him that we don't want his services, as we are not thieves ourselves, and don't know any people who are. Isn't there money to be paid for making good roads into bad ones ? and wages to the servants which ought not to be paid to them, because every penny goes into the pockets of the people who keep public-houses, whose business it is to make people drunk ? And now, George, you sheepish, dullish, muffish old simpleton ; tell me, you great imaginative, energetic, speculative genius, you tell me, like a dear, good, submissive, and obedient husband, as you are ; tell me where the money is to come from ?

Mr. B.—From the Scab Act, Kate. There, it's out now ; that's what I laughed at ; do I not well to be merry ? Our troubles will soon be over ; the money will come from the Scab Act. Cry no more, Kate ; the good time we've been expecting these thirty years is at hand ; dry up your tears, old wench, and call in the children to have a dance.

Mrs. B.—O mercy ! mercy ! that horrid act that is to take more money from us, and put us under the intolerable tyranny of an Inspector, who will order our sheep in at the lambing time ; who will tell us that our sheep are scabby when they're not, and will pronounce them clean when they are scabby ; who will march up our clean stairs with dirty boots, and order Jack or Bill to carry up his portmanteau for him, and scold Letty and Polly because there's no scented soap for him to wash his hands with ; who will eat our dinners, and get us fined fifty pounds every month or two, and who'll take care that you don't starve his horse, and who every time he comes and goes will take away a hatful of our family secrets with him ; and dare you tell me, Mr. Bankrup, that you will submit to be trampled on by anybody except your loving and faithful wife, who left her lovely home and darling parents, and gave up her freedom, and forfeited her womanly self-respect, and all because you begged and prayed upon your knees, and swore that if I didn't give consent your bride to be, you'd float a corpse upon the moonlit sea ?

Mr. B.—There now, adorable Kate, be calm ; I have a secret for you ; the Scab Act will save us ; I'm to be an Inspector myself. Now, don't be foolish ; don't be hysterical.

Mrs. B.—You ! an Inspector ! When ? What salary will they give you ? And I'll be the Inspector's lady !

Mr. B.—You shall, darling ; they'll give me three hundred a-year. There will be a Chief Inspector at eight hundred a-year, but that is to be reserved for great and honorable J—

W—. I'm to be one of the District Inspectors. As soon as the act is passed my appointment will come. It is certain to pass; my friends are at work. Fluster writes me that my appointment only awaits signature; that no man is more thought of than the colonist, with fourteen children. Tincan tells me that the bill is a true bill, by Jove, he says; and that my book is a true book, by Jove. Drunhead swears that if I was his own mother's son he could not have done more for me than he has done, and that he has not labored in vain. I'm second on the list. What think you of that, my chuck? What think you of that? Isn't it prime, now?

Mrs. B.—O! I think what I think; it's all very well to build castles, but don't neglect the potatoes. Here are the children for their dinners, in tatters and rags, as I've been told that poor worldly-minded Mrs. Gubbs says. Mrs. Bankrup's children are in rags and tatters, it's true enough, but O! who is to blame?

[Enter fourteen young ladies and gentlemen.]

ALL.—Papa, we'll want new boots.

LETTY.—I want ten yards of white calico.

POLLY.—So do I, and a dress.

JACK.—And I want powder and shot to shoot kangaroos with to make money by, for a hat and a suit of clothes.

TOM.—What's for dinner, ma?

WILL.—Potatoes and point, Tom.

TOM.—It couldn't be better stuff for you, Bill.

SUSAN.—I want a new flannel petticoat.

SARAH.—I want ribbon, and a new hat.

DICK.—And I want what I'll never get, a gun.

BOB.—And I don't want what I'm sure to get—a taste of pa's riding whip.

Mrs. B.—What has Bob been doing?

LETTY. O come away to dinner.

[Exeunt children.]

Mrs. B.—You hear, George, they all want something. What will you do if you don't get appointed Inspector on three hundred a-year?

Mr. B.—Tut, no fear; but if I'm not (I say it to satisfy you), the sooner we go "Back to Switzerland," as you sing, the better, my dear.

Mrs. B.—Dinner will be ready in a few minutes; there's no talking to you.

Mr. B.—I'll follow presently.

Of all the ills that wretched flesh is heir to,

Having the fear of Parliament's the worst;

At least if I have read my life aright,

Or profited by my own experience.

Kind heaven may send poor husbands compensation

For all the countless ills they have to endure;

But here there is no such thing. If a man marries,

And if he's children, then his anxiety

Attains the zenith, and in chaotic chasm

He longs to bury his dishonored head,

And seek forgetfulness in black oblivion.

What honor have I by being a happy father;

Happy ! mark me, of fourteen innocent babes ?
 What help, if I and all my babes were starving,
 Would our paternal Government afford me ?
 And yet by their abominable Scab Acts,
 And other acts imposing fresh taxation,
 They're driving me and my fifteen to starve.
 If I remonstrate, " O ! you can go," say they,
 " And take your bantlings and your wife elsewhere ;
 Your place a better man shall quickly fill :
 Is progress to be stopp'd because you take
 Exception to our immaculate proceedings ?"
 If I apply for office so that I may
 Stave off my creditors for a little while,
 I'm met by cool and calculating insult,
 Or else false hope is raised, which, like all hope,
 Is doomed to close in double disappointment,
 And all because I have the fourteen children,
 Which I should not have had, and therefore
 Unworthy am to live. Why don't they kill us,
 Us fathers ? take all we have, and let our children
 Rot shamelessly upon the dunghill's top,
 So that themselves can fatten on the spoil,
 As robbers on eight hundred pounds a-year,
 Or more or less, to fill their insatiate maws
 With beef and pudding, washed down by crusty port.
 And I may toil growing potatoes here,
 To scare the hungry wolf until my bones
 Ache without ceasing from the night to morn :
 Unhappy morn that brings our toils again
 As endless as the changes of the moon ;
 Bending and shivering in the unfeeling blast,
 While they sit in their princely offices
 Resting their slipper'd feet on velvet pile,
 Warming their backs before the glowing fire,
 Signing their names with infinite shrugs at " work,"
 Or saying " Yes " or " No," and calling that
 A wasting hard employment, for which they are not—
 No, by St. George, they are not paid at all,
 Save by a pitiful eight hundred pounds
 For every year of office. Is't not strange
 That an enlightened people should submit
 To this gross wrong ? But here they're dead,
 Politically dead—insensible as stones.

Mrs. B. (*within*)—Come to dinner, George ; be quick.

MR. B.—Yes, dear (*wiping a tear from his cheek*). [Exit.

SCENE II.—A STREET IN A COUNTRY TOWN.

Enter Gubbs reading a letter ; a bundle of newspapers under his arm.

GUBBS.—" I assure you, my dear Gubbs (faith I'm as dear to him as grubs are to the magpie), that it is settled, the course of the bill is fixed ; nineteen ayes, three noes, or thereabouts ; but I wish you to do me a favor (he does, or be hanged to him he'd never be so civil), as I know you can write and spell the sublime tongue of England correctly. (Can I ? faith, that's more

than I ever knew of myself, and a deuced sight more than my wife tells me.) I wish you would give us a lift from your secluded parts. (What the dickins does he want of a lift if the course of the bill is fixed?) These horrible quilldrivers, "Scrubber," "An Englishman," and others are driving public opinion against us, not that they can do us any harm, but we must have a strong party out of doors. (The sooner he's out doors the better.) A friend of mine, *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*, is tip top after my own heart. (Aye, and a blessed hard heart it is, too.) Read his letters, back him up, what he says swear to, and contradict everything the others say who are not for us; abuse them, sneer at them, copy their opinions in italics with notes of admiration; that'll gall them. Put their favorite words in inverted commas; that's the way to drive the beggars mad. Send your letter to me (I wish he may get it), I'll take care it shall be inserted. Kindest regards to Mrs. Gubbs (she'll be proud when I do his confounded politeness); a thousand apologies for not inviting you and Mrs. G. to my house in town, which is positively full just now (I hope it may keep so).—Yours most faithfully,

JN. WM. BLANK."

Impudence! Impudence! Impudence! Well!

Enter Bankrup.

Good morning, neighbour; How's Mrs. B., and the captain's company? You're pale man; and your face, bless me, how long it's growing!

BANK.—No wonder, Gubbs; are we not going ahead at a fine rate? Won't we have a nice legacy to leave our children?

GUBBS.—Yes, I dare say.

BANK.—O! I beg your pardon; my own fourteen innocent babes are always running in my head.

GUBBS.—No doubt of it. Was ever man so bless'd? Happy man! Your quiver is overflowing; I wish—but no matter.

BANK.—And yet you're happier than I; you have what I have not.

GUBBS.—Money? Yes, thank Heaven, that does not forget the worst of us; I have money, for which I bless my honesty more than my wit.

BANK.—And well you may (*aside*—a grab-all usurer). But what's the news? Anything better than the last?

GUBBS.—Better than the last? Yes, I hope so. Are you going to turn to and make your children's boots withal?

BANK.—With an awl? Gad, I believe if I have to fall back on the last, I can't do without an awl; but I mean the last news you heard about the Scab Act?

GUBBS.—Better and better; every hour brings better news. I'm waiting now for a telegram to cap the whole. That Prince of Solons, J. W. Blank, writes me word that the bill is as right as the head on his shoulders. But confound them, if they Inspector me, I know what I shall do; I shall slope; I shall hook it, old fellow. Nine thousand pounds at interest will keep me and Mrs Gubbs above unsaleable sheep and wool ninepence or tenpence a pound, and bills not worth a penny; to the deuce I'll fling 'em, Inspectors and all,

BANK.—You don't know who the Inspectors are likely to be, do you, now?

GUBBS.—No, I don't, and I don't care a pin; but I heard you applied to be one of 'em.

BANK.—Well, as you have heard it, I suppose it's no secret; but luck is against me—it always was.

GUBBS.—I think your family is in your favor; they'll be sure to remember your family; you've done the state some service, like the blackfellow in the play.

BANK.—Aye! (*sighing deeply*) but the state is apt to be ungrateful for that kind of service; I thought once, when put into a lawyer's office, that I should be Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, but I am not.

GUBBS.—Egad, I don't require a witch on a broomstick to tell me that; but I want you to write a letter.

BANK.—What about?

GUBBS.—Read this from Blank, that'll tell you; take it home with you; take care of it. Did you read his learned statistics about the losses through scab and all that?

BANK.—I did. What do you think of them?

GUBBS.—Rubbish, Sir, rubbish. The country does not lose a hundred and twenty thousand shillings a year by the existence of scab in our flocks. I like detestable exaggeration of all kinds. Why, the calculations of the benighted man ought to be rewarded by a pension of five thousand a year out of the public purse; I mean our private purses, to show how well we can appreciate such delightful stuff.

BANK.—I think his calculations are like mine about the Chief Justiceship. What's your idea of a Scab Act?

GUBBS.—I think people ought to keep their sheep clean, as clean as they can; you do, and I do, but we're never without spots. Why? Because our scrubby land is wet, cold, and rather over-stocked; hills and gullies combine to generate the disease; there's no doubt of this. I've proved it over and over again, let such profound logicians as *Magna est veritas* and the rest say what they please. Taking this as a basis of operations, I would throw out skirmishers for the mitigation of the evil by arming the Superintendents of Police, or some other official in the municipalities, with powers to inspect the flocks within their boundaries, not more than say twice a year, on giving notice, and at such times as will not put the sheepowners who are the main stay of the land to serious loss or ruin. If the sheep be found clean, well; if not, or if any doubt should be entertained, the officer should be empowered to summon a board of three or more of the immediate neighbors to examine the suspected flock; and if they are found diseased, to give notice to the owner that if they are not cured within six months, he will be held responsible and called before the nearest Warden or bench of magistrates to be fined for neglecting his sheep. I would give them power to prevent scabby sheep being driven along roads, except in cases where it was absolutely necessary so to drive them in order to have them shorn before dipping. I would make it punishable for a man to take scabby sheep into a sale yard. I would allow people to keep their sheep clean how they pleased, provided

they were kept clean. I look upon scab as a peculiar dispensation of Providence like the fluke, the blight, the rust, the caterpillar, which mankind for their sins shall never be free from. Give us an act that will keep us out of the Slough of Despond, if they must give us one, and not one that will sink us deeper and deeper. But I'll tell you this, Bankrup, all the acts in creation won't help us; we are suffering a proper reaction, a deserved punishment for a vain, blind, stupid, and perverse extravagance, and nothing can save us now but rigid economy, labor, and patience.

BANK.—It's my opinion, Gubbs, that nothing will save us but death; despair first, madness next, and then DEATH!

GUBBS.—Here's my telegram: Make the industrious pay! Hang 'em all up, a set of idiots!

Enter a boy with a letter.

BOY.—A telegram for Mr. Gubbs, Sir.

GUBBS.—Let's see! "Act passed in the other House; will become law next week; the letter quick.—J. W. B." It's too late for his letter, hang him; I'd like to stuff his act down his throat. Well, bear up, Bankrup; we'll ride together.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—A SHRUBBERY NEAR BANKRUP'S HOUSE.

Enter Miss Bankrup and Mr. Walter Spooney.

MISS B.—For heaven's sake, Walter, why are you so sad? What has happened?

SPOON.—O! nothing, dear Letty, only papa and I have had a conversation, and he says that he cannot now give me what he promised me, on account of the Scab Act; and that if I marry, I must leave his house and shift for myself on my own resources of a light heart and thin pantaloons.

MISS B.—And do you call that nothing? Why it will be my death. Our dream of happiness is over; our sweet romance is like the Dead Sea apple, dust and ashes; our bright sky is overcast, and all by that horrid act. O Walter! Walter! if you loved me I'm sure you could see a way out of these dreadful difficulties.

SPOON.—There's no way, my love, unless we like to marry, and then go and beg through the country. We can stain our faces with wattle bark juice, and put patches over our eyes, and make believe to have wooden legs, or go on crutches; and if we are lucky, we may save money in a year or two to go to another country.

MISS B.—O! cruel Walter! Now I'm sure you love me no more, to wish to see your wife a common beggar; better to say at once, "Letitia, our engagement is at an end." (*Weeps.*)

SPOON.—Don't cry, my dear; I can't bear it. All is over with us unless you like to wait until the Scab Act—

MISS B.—O! Don't mention that dreadful thing; but perhaps, Walter, you might have a friend in the Government who would make you an Inspector.

SPOON.—No such luck; I don't know any of them, and if I did I am too young, and I don't drink.

MISS B.—Well, what in the name of goodness are we to do?

SPOOK.—Wait for better times, Letty; wait until the country is goaded to rebellion; wait until the Scab Act is burnt at the foot of the gallows by the common hangman in presence of an excited mob, armed with bludgeons, and the effigy of its author is raised on high 'mid groans and jeers, and hurled head foremost into the devouring flames; wait, I say, for that happy day, and then they will be tears of joy and not of sorrow I'll kiss away.

MISS B.—O! Walter! I am faint. Lead me—lead me to my home. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.—BEFORE BANKRUP'S HOUSE.

Enter a pompous Gentleman.

GENT (*knocking*).—Who's at home here?

Enter Bankrup.

BANK.—Your servant, Sir.

GENT.—No, Sir, not at all; Mr. Bankrup, I believe?

BANK.—That's my name, Sir; What's your pleasure?

GENT.—As my business will take some time in explaining, will you oblige me by calling your servant to take my horse to your stable; he requires food and rest; I have come a long way.

BANK.—Yes, Sir, certainly; I have not much hay, Sir, but what little I have—Jack! Do you hear me, Jack?

Enter Jack Bankrup.

JACK.—What is it?

GENT.—Here, fellow, take my horse and put him in the stable; give him a good rubbing down, and mind you don't stint him in hay or corn.

JACK.—Fellow! I'm not fellow! You'd better take him yourself.

BANK.—He's my son, Sir. Come, Jack, take the horse; don't mind a mistake.

GENT.—He's very hungry; don't forget to feed him, Jack.

JACK (*aside*).—Hooks and eyes!

GENT.—Now, Sir.

BANK.—Yes, Sir.

GENT.—Hadn't we better have some refreshment before we proceed to business?

BANK.—Certainly, Sir, by all means. I beg your pardon, excuse me for a moment; I'll just see if our parlor has been dusted. [Exit.]

Miss Bankrup appears at an upper window.

GENT.—I say, my dear, are you the housemaid?

MISS B.—Sir, my master will hear what I say.

GENT.—O never mind him! duffer! snuff! I'm the Scab Inspector under the new act. It'll depend on you whether I'm severe on your master or not. Could you get me a nip of brandy, my dear?

MISS B.—I'll see what I can do, Sir.

(Pushes down a flower-pot on his head.)

GENT.—O! I'm killed! Murder! How dare you, you young vixen!

MISS B.—O, Sir, are you hurt? I'm so sorry; quite an accident.

(Pushes down another flower-pot on his back.)

GENT.—Murderess! What do you mean? I'll ruin you and your master.

Re-enter Bankrup.

BANK.—Ruin me, Sir? You can't do that, it's done already; this is the land of ruination, Sir. Ha! ha! ha!

GENT.—I'll have that jade, that housemaid of yours, before the magistrates, I will. Do you know who I am, Sir?

BANK.—No, Sir; but that's not my housemaid, she's my daughter.

GENT.—Your daughter! She has broken my head and my back, Sir. I'm the Inspector of sheep under the Scab Act, and I won't be used in this manner.

BANK.—Sir, my daughter must have been careless. And so you're the Inspector, Sir? Are there—any—more appointments to be—made, Sir? Do you—know, Sir?

GENT.—They're all filled up, Sir; I was the last, but I thought, Sir, I—

BANK.—O, yes, Sir; refreshment, Sir. Come this way, Sir. We'll put brown paper and vinegar on your head, Sir.

[They go into the house.]

Enter Jack and Bob.

JACK.—Take a bag, Bob, and a spade to the nearest jumpers' nest, and bring me some; I want 'em particularly.

BOB.—Yes, Jack; yes, Jack; I can smoke a pipe, Jack; jumpers can bite, Jack.

JACK.—That's what I want 'em for, you monkey, so off with you and get 'em.

BOB.—They might bite me, Jack.

JACK.—More fool you to let 'em; be off, Bob. The next kangaroo I shoot you shall have it.

BOB.—Good, Jack; shall I now? I'm off. *[Exeunt.]*

Re-enter Bankrup and Gentleman.

GENT.—And now, Sir, having refreshed the inner man, and shown you my credentials and authorities, I want to see your sheep immediately. How many have you?

BANK.—Not many, Sir; about two thousand; but I hope you will not insist on seeing them now, Sir, as the ewes are lambing, and to disturb them will involve a serious loss.

GENT.—Sir, I came to inspect your sheep, and I'll do my duty. As to their lambing, it is nothing to me; if you refuse to get them in, I will have you fined fifty pounds.

BANK.—Well, Sir, I'll do my best to get them into the paddock by to-morrow morning; in the mean time you must excuse me; pressing engagements. You can amuse yourself.

GENT.—O, leave me alone! I'll stroll about; I'll find amusement. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V.—A BEDROOM IN BANKRUP'S HOUSE.

Enter Bankrup and Inspector.

BANK.—Sir, I hope you'll rest peacefully and sleep soundly. Good night, Sir.

INSP.—No fear but I shall. Good night, Bankrup; I'll see the sheep at ten.

BANK.—Very well, Sir.

[*Exit.*]

INSP.—A fine old fellow; hair like snow; works hard; I pity him; What a family! Well, I'll turn in as I am; always keep on my clothes in a strange bed. (*Gets into bed*). Let me see, shall I blow out the candle? Not yet. Three hundred a year; what a prime lift! And wasn't I near missing it? I told that boy to clean my boots; I wonder will he do it; he grinned like a young cat. What the dev—halloo! murder! fire! (*jumping out of bed.*) You Bankrup! thieves! scorpions! (*slapping his legs.*) Help! ho!

Enter Bankrup.

BANK.—What's the matter? What in the name of heaven is the matter?

INSP.—Matter, Sir? I tell you what—it is, Sir—this is—beyond human—endurance—Sir—so it is—and I won't submit—to be—stung by—big black—ants—to please you—or—any of your con—founded br—look, the bed is—alive with them.

BANK.—So 'tis, 'pon my life; this is that Bob's work. Where's that Bob? where's that Bob?

[*Rushes out followed by Inspector.*]

SCENE VI.—BEFORE BANKRUP'S HOUSE.

Enter Inspector and Bankrup.

INSP.—Well, Sir, I've seen your sheep; they are scabby, decidedly. Why half of the ewes have no wool on their bellies. How do you account for that?

BANK.—Very easily. The ewes when they're giving milk loose their wool; some call it the milk fever.

INSP.—Well, it may admit of a doubt; there did not appear to be anything the matter with the skin, but I found one sheep with a green spot on its back, which was scab most unquestionably.

BANK.—Scab! O you mean the perspiration we call *scratchimberimus incommodiensis*.

INSP.—I never heard of that. I must make a note of that. To knock down flower pots on me, and put jumpers into my bed, and smear my boots with tar. Your sheep are scabby, Sir; have them all branded with the letter S, three inches long, and put the required notices on the gate posts and into the papers. I'll do my duty; I'll enforce the act.

BANK.—I shall have no lambs; and I lost five hundred sheep last year by the fluke.

INSP.—I don't care for that; see it done; I shall be here again in a fortnight, and I'll keep an eye on flower pots and beds.

BANK.—Have you a copy of the act, Sir? May I look at it?

INSP.—Here it is; read it.

BANK. (*Tearing it into ribbons and pulling out a knife.*—Now, TIGER, did you ever see a desperate man before?

INSP.—O! help! mad, by Jupiter! Murder! [*Rushes out.*]

Enter Mrs. Bankrup and children.

BANK.—Away! Away! After the tyrant;
Pursue the desperate robber, who has fled,
And drag him to the bar of raging justice.
Go to the Government, thou helpless mother
Of fourteen innocent and helpless babes;
Tell them——

MRS. B.—O George! O George! Give me that knife!
Be calm and bear your troubles like a man.

BANK.—Yes, Angelina, take from me this tempter;
Call back that cruel man; I do forgive him.
He plucks the bread from our poor children's mouths;
Like a hyæna grins he in their faces;
He orders me to brand my sheep, to publish them,
As scabby scarecrows to make fools laugh.
Farewell for ever peace, prosperity,
The free and happy mind, the innocent thought,
That hurt no man, nor made me blush for thinking;
Farewell the dreamless slumber, the merry heart,
The seasonable jest, the healthful laugh,
Th' ambition to be wise, the fond desire
To leave some help to those dear souls we love,
Who shall survive us in this thorny world.
Farewell! We'll bear our griefs till they destroy us,
But ne'er know rest or happiness again.

Re-enter Inspector with Gubbs and Walter Spooncy.

INSP. (*To Gubbs.*)—You are a magistrate. I charge this man, Bankrup by name, with being a dangerous madman; he raved, and swore, and called me tiger, and rushed at me with a knife, so that in terror of my life I bravely fled, but fortunately met you coming.

MISS B. (*Throwing herself on Spooncy's breast.*)—Dear Walter, save us! save us! O misery! [*Faints.*]

MRS. B.—My daughter! help! Run for a doctor!

GUBBS (*To Inspector.*)—Bankrup is not mad, but has been driven crazy, poor fellow, by your tyranny, and the system of spoliation that is getting the ascendancy in our happy and favoured island, a place which shall not hold myself and Mrs. Gubbs many days longer, I can tell you. Do you think that any man of spirit, who can go and live elsewhere on the fruits of his past industry, will stay here and submit to be knocked down, morally speaking, a hornpipe danced on his prostrate body, and to have his pocket picked by an insolent Jack, whose duty it ought to be to dip our sheep and get them clean? Must I go to no end of expense to eradicate scab, and in addition help to pay you your handsome salary, for lording it over me, and giving you the means for playing the holiday gentleman through the land, while my back is broken with

labor, and my mind in rags, like a beggar's blanket, with scorpion stinging anxiety? Not if I can save myself from the detestable infliction; and so I shall advise all who have a spark of spirit, an ounce of sense, or a rap, as the saying is, to jingle against a tombstone.

[*Exeunt.*

INSP.—I'll report this case; I'll make an example; I'll enforce the ACT.

